GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Collaborating with Community: Introduction, Rationale and Guide for Government

Violence Prevention Initiative

Presented by the Violence Prevention Initiative
in partnership with community and government representatives

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary i

Purpose of Guide 1

What is Community Collaboration? 1

Where Else Do We See Community Collaboration as a Model? 2
- Public Health Care 2
- Natural Resources 2
- Environmental Protection 2
- School Development 3

Has It Been Done Before in Newfoundland and Labrador? 4
- Strategic Social Plan 4
- Violence Prevention Initiative 4
- Victims of Violence Working Group 5
- Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada 6

What are the Benefits for Government? 7

What Values Guide the Community Collaboration Process? 7

Common Questions Around Collaborating with Community 9
- Why? 9
- Who? 10
- What Issues? 10
- And Finally ... How? 11
  - Step 1: Establish The Collaborating Team 12
  - Step 2: Articulate and Commit to Principles and Values 13
  - Step 3 Examine Issues and Objectives. 13
  - Step 4: Plan for Action and Evaluation 14
  - Step 5: Constantly Communicate and Network 14
  - Step 6: Accomplish Objectives, Document and Implement the Results 15
  - Step 7: Follow Up and Evaluate 16

Conclusion 17

The Creation of this Guide 18

Appendix A - Key Learnings 19
From the Population and Public Health Branch 19
From the Community Collaboration Assessment Tool 21

References and Resources 22

Executive Summary

The relationship between government and community groups is changing. It is no longer acceptable for government to "just" consult with the community on the important issues affecting them. Government and community must increasingly work collaboratively to make real changes. This document is intended to guide government departments and agencies in their efforts to collaborate with community.

Collaboration has been defined as:

> *a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem [or issue] can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.*[1]

Several points of that definition are key to Community Collaboration:

a. It is a process. It is not an end in and of itself, but a (sometimes difficult) process aimed at finding solutions.

b. It is grounded in the reality that the different parties involved see a problem or an issue from different perspectives - but this is viewed as a good thing as it brings a broader and more multi-faceted understanding of the causes and possible solutions of the problem.

c. It is solution focused - not advisory. The intent is to work together to find a solution that all agree with - not for one party to advise the other and they to make a decision separate from the Community Collaboration process.

Community Collaboration has been successful in many sectors and places throughout the world. Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have several examples of successful community collaboration:

- have begun to root our social policy development in the tenets of the Strategic Social Plan which is based upon a collaborative approach;
- the recent Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada called for a dramatically different, *collaborative* approach to the problems facing the Confederation, and
- the Department of Human Resources and Employment has recently completed a highly successful government-collaborative initiative to find solutions to the impacts of departmental policy changes on Victims of Violence.

To enable other departments and agencies to understand and engage communities collaboratively, this Guide answers some of the key questions ("Why? Who? What Issues?") and identifies the key steps to the process. These are:

Step 1: Establish the Collaborating Team

Step 2: Articulate and Commit to Principles and Values

Step 3: Examine Issues and Objectives.

Step 4: Plan for Action and Evaluation

Step 5: Constantly Communicate and Network

Step 6: Accomplish Objectives, Document and Implement the Results

Step 7: Evaluate and Follow Up

Although each collaborative process will be different depending on the issues, partners and priorities, it is hoped this document will provide guidelines for government and community groups to use when collaborating to find solutions.

Underlying this rationale of Community Collaboration is the acknowledgment that government does not have all the pieces of the puzzle. Therefore, it needs to collaborate with the people who have different pieces of that same puzzle - pieces just as credible and often based on front-line experience. Community will identify to government policies that aren't working as well as they could because they were developed in isolation of communities, group and other departments.

More subtly, Community Collaboration is also about changing who influences policy formation in Newfoundland and Labrador. It builds on the Strategic Social Plan directive that government be more inclusive when it comes to who has input and influence in the development of its policies.

The creation of this guide was funded by the Violence Prevention Initiative, led by the Women's Policy Office of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is based upon the experiences of both government and community in the province and is drawn from their thoughts, discussions and meetings.

Purpose of Guide

The purpose of this document is to act as an introduction, rationale and a guide to Government departments and agencies wishing to better understand and implement a community collaboration process. It is meant to do so succinctly and clearly. Additional references and resources are provided for those seeking a more lengthy examination of the topic.

The Guide is meant to be neither exhaustive nor academic, rather to easily deploy the concept and techniques of Community Collaboration.

"Community Collaboration: An Introduction, Rationale and Guide for Government Departments and Agencies" will:

- introduce and explain Community Collaboration;
- identify other sectors and areas where Community Collaboration has been working successful;
- examine the rationale for Community Collaboration - why it is an important tool;
- list the steps to the Community Collaboration process, and
- gather resources and references for further enquiry.

What is Community Collaboration?

Collaboration has been succinctly defined as:

> *a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem [or issue] can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.*[2]

This definition focuses on several key points about Community Collaboration:

- It is a process. It is not an end in and of itself, but a process to find solutions.
- It is grounded in the reality that the different parties involved see a problem or an issue from different perspectives - but this is viewed as a good thing as it brings a broader and more multi-faceted understanding of the causes and possible solutions of the problem.
- It is solution focused - not advisory. The intent is to work together to find a solution that all agree with - not for one party to advise the other and they to make a decision separate from the Community Collaboration process.

When government and community collaborate, it is a different process than consulting or setting up advisory boards. For a collaboration to be most effective, the highest level of government is interested and committed to the process, there are expectations of results from government, and it is given credibility by all stakeholders.

According to one persons experience with collaboration, "[The solution] has to be negotiated to the point were either we "agree to disagree" or where something is gong to be done. The end result is not a document - it is action. That is one big thing marking the difference between a consultation and a collaboration."

As this comment illustrates, Community Collaboration is a different way of thinking and acting. It can become a tool, which, when used correctly, more clearly recognizes where the knowledge resides, who is excluded and who is included in public policy formation and why. The essence of Community Collaboration is about sharing knowledge and power for policy making among all the key stakeholders - government, advocacy groups, front line workers and others.

Where Else Do We See Community Collaboration as a Model?

Community Collaboration has been around for a while in many sectors, in many countries, and more recently here in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Community Collaboration is one tool in the suite of tools open to government and it is part of a new management style of openness and inclusion within the public sector.

The following are some examples of how community collaboration has worked in other jurisdictions and other sectors.

Public Health Care

Development of **Public Health Care** Policy is one example of Community Collaboration in practice. In the late 1990's, the Population and Public Health Branch (Atlantic Region) of Health Canada adopted the concept of social and economic inclusion as an overarching goal. They have documented the "Key Learnings" from the Community Collaboration to implement that goal. Many of the key learnings are mirror images of the Steps and information presented in this guide.[3]

Natural Resources

In the **Natural Resource Sector**, there are many examples of Community Collaboration. One only need look to the development of sustainable forest management plans to see the challenges governments have faced to bring together community, industry, aboriginal groups and government. In many cases, governments have employed Community Collaboration as a technique to develop a Forest Management Plan that all can buy into and live with. As an example, one can look at some of the Canadian Model Forests.[4]

Environmental Protection

In Puerto Rico, Community Collaboration has led to the establishment of Bosque del Pueblo, a nature and wilderness reserve. As the organizers put it,

> *For the first time in the island's history, a community is in charge of managing a government-owned reserve. It also was the first time in 50 years that a region was designated protected at the initiative of a community-based group. The leadership of Massol-González in this campaign has led to a new model of community and government collaboration. The reserve is locally run, and Casa Pueblo has developed opportunities to involve scientists, specialists, artists, young people, and adults who volunteer their labor in virtually every aspect of the forest's management. The cultural significance of the forest is incorporated into the ecologically sustainable activities that take place within it. Local volunteers lead walking tours and offer visitors educational programs on environmental and cultural topics. Ecologically friendly cabins are available for visiting organizations.*[5]

In another example, Community Collaboration was a key technique used to the successful creation of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) of Race Rocks in British Columbia. It brought together many diverse and competing interests and were able to agree upon the parameters and regulations of the MPA as can be seen in the adjacent text box.[6]

Marine Protected Area Created Based upon Community Collaboration

The First Nations people have long recognized the importance of the ocean and particular significance of XwaYeN," said Tom Sampson of the Coast Salish Sea Council. "The creation of this first Marine Protected Area under the Oceans Act is a positive step toward creating mutual understanding of our cultural values. It will have an impact on not only the living marine resources and their environment but on Canadians and, most importantly, their children."

"Protection of the rich marine waters at XwaYeN (Race Rocks) is an important step towards establishing a system of marine protected areas in Canada," said Sabine Jessen, Conservation Director for the BC Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. "The community and government collaboration at XwaYeN is a model for future MPAs. The conservation community is committed to continuing our efforts to protect other ecologically important marine habitats on all of Canada's coasts."

"The whale watching and eco-tourism industry is proud to be an integral participant in the MPA process and is extremely pleased that this ecological marine environment will now receive additional protection," said Dan Kukat, Vice President of the Whale Watch Operators Association (North West) and Sport Fish Advisory Board Member (Victoria Chapter). "The recreational and sport fishing community is pleased to provide continued support in the conservation of marine species."[2] (From Official Opening Press Release)

School Development

In **School Development**, Community Collaboration is considered a key tool. There are many examples of how school administrations, communities, students and parents have come together using Community Collaboration.

Collaborative arrangements can help to bridge the factionalism that often crops up within a community. As Cathy Jordan, program manager of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's Rural Collaborative Action Team program, observes, "Small communities cannot afford to have their resources split." Yet factionalism and divisiveness often cripple efforts to initiate community-based projects. By offering a neutral setting and process, an equal voice for all participants, and guidelines for keeping the focus on issues rather than personalities, a formal collaboration can help to bring all parties to the table and get them working toward common goals.[7]

Has It Been Done Before in Newfoundland and Labrador?

There are several examples of Community Collaboration being successfully implemented in Newfoundland and Labrador or recommended as a possible solution for seemingly intractable issues. This includes the Strategic Social Plan, the Violence Prevention Initiative, the Victims of Violence Working Group, and the Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada.

Strategic Social Plan

In 1998, the Provincial Strategic Social Plan (SSP) identified the need for new approaches in social policy development. This included government and the community finding more effective ways to address social and economic development issues.

The SSP identifies a number of strategies for the development of better public policy, including:

- community - government partnerships,
- collaboration,
- inclusion,
- prevention and early intervention,
- regional voice in policy development,
- co-ordinated, client- centred service and
- accountability for results.[8]

> *During the public consultation process, community groups and agencies throughout the province told us they wanted to be part of the solution. They wanted an active role in implementing the Strategic Social Plan and in assessing its effectiveness. Government accepts this position and furthermore recognizes that progress will depend on such involvement. The issues confronting the province are not ones that Government action alone can resolve.* Strategic Social Plan, p.17

The Strategic Social Plan is the first of its kind and a model within Canada. It is the key instrument by which the Government has made a long-term commitment to inclusion in social policy development. The Plan reinforces the wisdom that effective solutions arise from a sense of responsibility and a capacity to act which only comes from involving people. An important challenge facing Government is to find appropriate ways to foster the broad participatory processes that support implementation of the Plan.

Violence Prevention Initiative

The Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) is a five year inter-departmental, government-community partnership established to seek long term solutions to the causes of violence. The VPI developed from the Provincial Strategy Against Violence and was very much linked to the goals and based upon the tenets of the Strategic Social Plan. As such, to be more inclusive and collaborative, the VPI created a Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) to provide overall direction to the Violence Prevention Initiative.

Government partners include:

- Women's Policy Office
- Strategic Social Plan
- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

- Departments of Justice, Education, Human Resources and Employment, Health and Community Services, Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education, and Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

Community partners include:

- The six regional coordinating committees of the VPI
- Provincial Association Against Family Violence
- Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Citizens Crime Prevention Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Seniors Resource Centre

One of the ways the PCC provides direction to the Violence Prevention Initiative is to promote and encourage the integration of communication processes within each government department which foster long-term, effective collaboration with the community on program and policy development. The creation of this Guide was one of the objectives of the VPI.

Victims of Violence Working Group

The Victims of Violence Working Group is another example of successful community -government collaboration in the provincial government. Many of the steps and lessons learned from that process have informed the development of this guide.

The Department of Human Resources and Employment (HRE) began redesigning its income support program to better meet the needs and concerns of clients. Advocacy groups knew the income support program did not support the needs of victims of violence. Most of the issues related to policies, procedures, training for staff, improved linkages with other agencies and improved communications with clients.

HRE established the Victims of Violence Working Group (VVWG) in 2001 to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and concerns of victims of violence and to examine the impact of HRE's income support policies upon victims of violence.

In their 2002 report Moving Forward: Responding to the Needs of Victims of Violence, Social Policy Development Through Collaboration and Partnerships, the VVWG made recommendations which have improved how HRE responds to victims of violence as well as potential victims.

The model adopted by the VVWG assumes that the main players in social development - community groups and government departments and agencies - are equal partners in establishing common objectives, and designing and implementing realistic solutions to the needs of victims of violence.

The Working Group, in the identification of issues and solutions, sought input from various stakeholders, including the:

- Provincial Association Against Family Violence,

- Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the
- Some of the women's centres,
- transition houses
- ad-hoc women's groups
- a variety of provincial government departments and agencies.

All of the solutions presented by the Working Group were consistent with the SSP framework for policy development, the VPI policy criteria for policy development and the Strategic Plan of the Department.[9]

It was a risk for HRE to engage in this process, but it was a risk to not do it as well. The issues were difficult and long standing. Some of the critical keys to success within the government was a supportive and non-risk adverse executive and public servants and a strong community voice.

Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada

Recently, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador heard the results of its Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada. They traveled around the province and did significant research into the models of the Canadian Confederation and how to adapt it to meet the needs and demands of the people of this Province. One of their key recommendations was the Confederation needed to better collaborate.

> *Certain key qualities would have to characterize any new, effective relationship between the provincial government and the federal government. A true partnership would be based on collaboration between the governments and between their senior officials, with an ongoing commitment to understanding each other's challenges, concerns and capacities. Their working relationships would transcend partisan interests, and would be marked by respect and an absence of dismissive or condescending attitudes. Such a partnership would be firm enough to withstand major crises, flexible enough to accommodate special circumstances, and creative enough to find solutions to unique needs. Both governments would have to be transparent in their dealings with each other, and to be resolute if either feels that the other has violated values or agreements. Building on the values which have marked the history of Canada and the history of Newfoundland and Labrador, the partnership would operate within the framework of the federation while influencing the ongoing evolution of the federation. This kind of relationship does not exist today.*[10]

What are the Benefits for Government?

There are many benefits to government when they develop policies by collaborating with community, the primary one being better policy. According to HRE in the VVWG report,

> *The issues and solutions presented in this reports have been extremely valuable in assisting the Department in identifying ways to better respond to the needs of victims of violence. The Working Group has also highlighted that a partnership approach between government and the community is vital to moving forward.*[11]

Other benefits include:

- Better solutions to issues;
- More inclusive decisions made and policies developed;
- Takes away the tunnel vision that sometimes occurs when departments act in isolation and replaces it with a more holistic one;
- Creates an understanding within government that when a policy decision is made, the ramifications of it often bulge out somewhere else.

> ***What are the Benefits?***
> *By working through a collaborative group, you can help assure that your initiative will weather changes in personnel or politics. Good ideas need time to take root, but time also means change. Almost everyone who's worked in the public schools has seen a terrific program or instructional approach die when the teacher or administrator who nurtured it moved on to another locale. With a broad base of support, however, good ideas are no longer dependent on the energy and dedication of a few.*
> (Benefits[2], Issue 5)

But these can only be considered benefits if they are valued by government and the community itself as benefits.

What Values Guide the Community Collaboration Process?

Shared values are critical to successful Government and Community Collaboration. At the highest level, these values must include:

- Inclusion
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Commitment
- Respect for all Viewpoints. This is an acceptance that no one group (including government) has all the answers and that credible knowledge resides in many places and people.

The values guiding the deliberations of the Victims of Violence Working Group included:

- respect for the dignity of all persons,
- the right to live without risk,

- respect for individual choice, responsive and holistic service that is pro-active in the prevention of abuse and violence, and
- that interventions are non-judgmental and validating.

In addition, the group identified many of the underlying values cultivated by the group:

- Trust,
- Sense of equal partnership and ownership of issues,
- Commitment to community partnerships,
- Safe, open and honest environment and
- Focussing on the task at hand: issues came up which affected other departments; notes were taken and issues were brought to the attention of the relevant department; did not try to solve at working group level.

Some of the commitments to the process that were made included:

- Working within realistic time lines and budgets; did not extend deadlines,
- Following through with commitments quickly to make things work,
- Compromise and hard work,
- Efficient organization and record keeping,
- Sharing information (i.e. access to policies and manuals) and
- Continuity of group (few alternates).

Common Questions Around Collaborating with Community

Why?

Community groups and government departments and agencies have often struggled with how to work together, given their sometimes differing mandates, priorities, and points of view. In recent times governments have come to realize community involvement in social development is no longer an option, rather it is mandatory to develop the best policy.

There have been many other attempts to integrate voices outside of government in policy development. Royal Commissions, public hearings, ministerial advisory committees, roundtables, individual consultations, legislative committees and public opinion polls are all tools of government to hear opinions and recommendations on policy development.

> *Government has to be prepared for great passion, knowledge and cynicism from community. Also, some impatience with government bureaucracy and sophisticated process, political and media knowledge and skills!*

From the perspective of community groups, many of these consultations were exclusionary and superficial. While often providing the opportunity to present their views, rarely did the opportunity present itself to remove the "we/they" nature of these processes. "We (the community)" present and perhaps debate and then "they (the government)" go away and deliberate in private and develop the recommendations. Or when recommendations were written that involved community, they often weren't actioned. They gathered dust because commitment to the solutions was not built into the process. Government was frustrated because policy was not achieving the stated goals and community was frustrated because they never felt they truly had impacted the policy development process. There remained a wall between the "we" and "they".

The Strategic Social Plan is about getting beyond that. The Government and Community Collaboration mandated by the SSP is about finding solutions where there is disagreement and getting to those solutions together.

Underlying this rationale of Community Collaboration an acknowledgment that government does not have all the pieces of the puzzle. Therefore, it needs to collaborate with the people who have different pieces of that same puzzle - pieces just as credible and often based on front-line experience. Community will identify to government policies that aren't working as well as they could because they were developed in isolation of communities, group and other departments.

More subtly, Community Collaboration is also about changing who influences policy formation in Newfoundland and Labrador. It builds on the Strategic Social Plan directive that government be more inclusive when it comes to who has input and influence in the development of its policies.

Who?

The question of "Who?" should be involved in Government and Community Collaboration will vary with each issue. While this is covered in Step 1 in the section below, it is important to note the approach, commitment, networks and values of who is involved is as important as any other credentials they may have.

It is important representatives of the individuals impacted by the policy or who have other legitimate stakes and knowledge in the issue are involved. But the groups must be chosen with care. Often within community there are groups which represent fundamentally and philosophically different perspectives on issues. The purpose of collaboration is not to re-visit the fundamental philosophies, but, once government has committed to an action, to develop the best policies to implement that direction. Having groups around the same table with diametrically opposed philosophies and values will not result in successful collaboration ~ collaborative processes are intended to bring people with shared goals and respect for each others values around the same table to develop sound policy.

This may not appear inclusive. Indeed, it may appear to be substituting one type of exclusionary process for another. But it is not. The purpose of Government and Community Collaboration is to develop the best policies to implement a government goal - it is not a forum to debate those goals. That forum is usually an election. The selection of groups in a Government and Community Collaboration should not include those who have opposing values on the issue for consideration, and whose intent is to debate the underlying principles of the policy as they will never get beyond the "Agreement on Values" Step of the process.

In addition, many government departments and agencies may need to be involved. There are few government policies self-contained within the jurisdiction and expertise of a single department or agency.

What happens when there are community groups with opposite points of view on an issue? That issue shouldn't be picked for this process. You need openness and willingness to do this. It is not every issue you can do this with. But there are lots of processes where it is working.

Finally, regional representation must be included. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are few, if any, issues which do not have a regional dimension to them, particularly in the case of our more remote communities and our aboriginal communities.

What Issues?

So, what issues are best pursued via Government and Community Collaboration? Again, there is no definitive list. Rather the following should be considered:

The issues need to be "flash points". That is, they need to be current; an issue that has generated considerable pressure from community. Ideally, it is an issue where something hasn't worked for many years and government is searching for answers.

Government and Community Collaboration is not, however, a way to superficially treat a difficult issue.

Community will quickly ascertain the issue is being treated as giving them "busy work". It is not meant as a way to say an issue is being "handled" - it must be a genuinely sincere intent by government. If the commitment and interest at the higher levels of the relevant government department are not present, community will quickly disengage their limited resources for other, legitimate activities.

And Finally ... How?

The following steps were identified as key to the HRE success with the Victims of Violence Working Group and reflect the experiences of other Government and Community Collaboration efforts (see Appendices). The steps are also based upon discussion with key players from the community and government who participated in the VVWG process.

While these steps are drawn from this process, the intent is to make them generic to any government and community collaborative process. They are meant to be read in conjunction with the rationale outlined earlier in this document.

The steps are:

Step 1: Establish the Collaborating Team

Step 2: Articulate and Commit to Principles and Values

Step 3: Examine Issues and Objectives

Step 4: Plan for Action and Evaluation

Step 5: Constantly Communicate and Network

Step 6: Accomplish Objectives, Document and Implement the Results

Step 7: Evaluate and Follow Up

These are expanded in the following pages.

Step 1: Establish The Collaborating Team

1. a) *Consider the Voices that Need to be Heard on this Issue.* Be aware of any biases around inclusion/exclusion. These voices could include:

- Advocacy groups
- Representatives from all regions of the province to give different perspectives
- Representatives from government, including support from management and people with a diversity of skills
- Involvement of people who have high level of credibility and understanding of community needs and grass roots issues

1. b) *Identify the Lead.* Selection of the right lead person is critical to the success of the collaborating team. The lead person must:

- Understand the nature of community/government partnerships
- Have the respect and "buy-in" of all partners
- Represent the priorities and objectives of all partners
- Give up power: act as a facilitator of group, rather than the decision maker
- Listen to the views of group and be prepared to represent them
- Act as a resource for the group, providing information regarding partners and issues

> ***Need Solutions Oriented Managers...***
> *Solutions oriented Managers Directors are critical - not those that just order reports. They need to be able to take the risk. The lead person has to be a mediator and a skilled negotiator and someone who has the respect*

1 c) *Identify Group Members:* As with the selection of the lead, the identification of members of the collaborating team is key to the success of the collaboration process. Members must:

- Appreciate the values and share the each others objectives
- Possess complementary skills (i.e. a balance of front line vs. policy experience)
- Represent issues of target groups
- Be able to facilitate communications and to network with partners

Step 2: Articulate and Commit to Principles and Values

The Collaborating Team must agree to principles that will guide the collaborative process. Similarly, they must articulate and commit to common values to bridge differences in personalities, objectives and beliefs.

The values guiding the deliberations of the Victims of Violence Working Group included:

- Respect for the dignity of all persons,
- The right to live without risk,
- Respect for individual choice, responsive and holistic service that is pro-active in the prevention of abuse and violence, and
- That interventions are non-judgmental and validating.

All collaborating teams need to spend time at the beginning of the process to identify their principles and values, and to return to them as "touchstones" guiding their deliberations and actions throughout the process.

The Two Basic Dimensions of Working Collaboratively...

For a diverse collection of individuals to develop into a cohesive, working group requires activities along two basic dimensions: team building and team planning. Team building is the process through which group members find ways of shaping an unwieldy bundle of individual ideas, interests, and needs into a well-focused purpose and plan of action that all group members can support. Team planning involves carefully assessing local needs and resources, identifying priorities, and finding manageable ways of addressing those needs.

Neither of these tasks can be hurried or skipped over if a group is to succeed in making a difference within the community. What's more, they need to happen – almost – at one and the same time. In the beginning, team building should dominate the group's attention; in later stages, planning will take precedence. But team building without planning is an empty process, while planning without team building is like asking a random set of strangers to suit up for the Super Bowl.
(Benefits[2] (Issue #6, 1999)

Step 3 Examine Issues and Objectives.

The Collaborating Team must work together to answer the following questions:

- Why is the process needed?
- What problems should be addressed?
- What is the goal of the process? (write a report, lobby government, get a policy through the system, change points of view)
- Who are the target groups?
- What are the objectives and priorities of different partners?
- What are the common objectives of all partners?
- What are the gaps?

In this manner their goals and objectives are established and agreed upon. This process also enables members to acknowledge what they are and are not attempting to accomplish.

Step 4: Plan for Action and Evaluation

Before the collaborating Team gets "down to business", it is important that they clearly define the mandate of the group and plan how to reach objectives, i.e. what should be accomplished by the end of the process? Questions to answer include:

- What action needs to be taken to meet objectives?
- What is a realistic time frame for completion of activities?
- What resources are available (financial, human, infrastructure)?
- How will the process be evaluated to measure success?

In the HRE example, an evaluation framework was not developed. However, it was agreed that in the future use of the model, an evaluation framework should be incorporated into the beginning steps of the process. What this would entail would vary for each collaborative process, but would probably include:

- Taking (at minimum) a full meeting to discuss the evaluation strategy
- Possibly turning the evaluation over to someone experienced in evaluation within the department, with guidelines provided by the collaborating team
- Considering the engagement of an external objective evaluator to be engaged in a formative and/or a summative evaluation.

As an example of a time line, the Victims of Violence Working Group said up front they would finish in 6-8 months; they met every 6 weeks for one full day and added two additional days towards the end to stay within that 6-8 month time frame. In other words, they added meetings to finish the work instead of extending the time frame. Adding the Evaluation component will also add to the time required. The amount of time will depend on the type of evaluation and whether it is being done internally or externally.

Step 5: Constantly Communicate and Network

Communication and Networking has to be constant throughout the process.

5 a) Stay Connected at the Collaborating Team Level

Collaborating Team members must keep informed of issues on an ongoing basis via meetings, telephone and e-mail and they must expect to stay closely involved throughout process.

5 b) Network/Broker within Government Department or Agency

The collaborating team, particularly the lead person, **must** broker and network within government departments and agencies to best communicate the activities and results of the collaborating team. This then lays the basis of their understanding and ownership of actions to be taken by the collaborating team. To do this effectively, it is critical the lead person has the time, ability, and intent to:

- Understand decision-making hierarchy and how to "work the layers" within the department or agency.

- Meet with ministers, deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, directors, other officials and front line staff. Educate them regarding issues.
- Brief key officials within department or agency throughout process. Keep issues on their agenda.

In the HRE example, the lead person discussed draft recommendations within the department as they were being developed. At times, additional departmental information or issues were brought back to the committee. The lead also took time to share the key values and principles of the committee with senior departmental personnel.

5 c) Network/Broker with Community Groups

The Collaborating Team must liaise with community groups to provide updates regarding the process and to gain insight into the community's thoughts. They may communicate information to advocacy groups through fact sheets and other communication tools.

Throughout the process, it is important to find out how well the collaborating team is meeting the needs of its target groups.

In the HRE example, surveys were undertaken to validate the relevance of issues being studied. Staff and residents at shelters were asked to provide their input and were encouraged to collect data. Front-line workers within HRE were asked questions about their understanding of issues. Input was sought from shelters on the impact of recommendations and what were the key priority items. In this way the VVWG was able to validate its recommendations and determine what were the one or two most critical issues.

Step 6: Accomplish Objectives, Document and Implement the Results

As the identified objectives are accomplished, they need to be documented and how they are implemented understood, pursued and communicated to the stakeholders and the public. This may take a variety and a number of forms, including developing deliberate media interest. As an example, in keeping with the Community Collaboration process, HRE included the community in the press conference on the release of their report.

Once the members of the VVWG completed their report: Moving Forward, Responding to the Needs of Victims of Violence, HRE recognized the need to follow up with information sessions throughout the province to ensure the issues were understood and that action was being taken. Regional sessions within HRE were held to give all staff the opportunity to fully understand the report. Senior officials within the Department (i.e. Departmental Lead and Assistant Deputy Minister) travelled around province and met with district managers and supervisors to seek input and understanding.

Step 7: Follow Up and Evaluate

Periodic followup on impact of policy changes have to be initiated over time to ensure that the changes are being implemented and that the desired results are being achieved. One way to achieve this is to re-convene the working group to assess the progress. This step was not formalized by HRE but was recognized afterwards as a critical one, together with evaluation. (See Step 4.)

Conclusion

The relationship between government and community groups is changing. It is no longer acceptable for government to "just" consult with the community on the important issues affecting them. Government and community must work together collaboratively to make real changes.

Although each collaborative process will be different depending on the issues, partners and priorities, it is hoped this document will provide guidelines for government and community groups to use when collaborating to find solutions.

... a Hallmark for the Potential of Collaboration Between Government and the Community...

The Victims of Violence Working Group is a case in point of the extent to which the collaborative process can be successful. For more than twenty years Government has been "consulting" extensively with transition houses, and other stakeholders, in relation to the issues surrounding violence. Until recently, these consultation processes most often resulted in recommendations being made but not being actioned.

From the beginning, I sensed that the Victims of Violence Working Group was going to be different, and I was cautiously optimistic. At the end of the day, the Working Group proved to be successful in recommending significant policy changes in relation to income support for victims of violence; and these recommendations were accepted by Government. The success of this Working Group can be attributed to a wide variety of factors not the least of which is the inclusivity of the Group's members and which included representatives from front line agencies who work, on a daily basis, with victims of violence and who represent their voice.

A leader, in Roxie Wheaton, who acted as a facilitator and a broker between Government and the Working Group's community representatives; who listened to our views; and who represented our views, to Government, was key to the success of the Group. Shared values; common, stated goals; adherence to established, realistic deadlines also contributed markedly to the success of this Working Group.

The Creation of this Guide

The creation of this guide was funded by the Violence Prevention Imitative, led by the Women's Policy Office, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is based upon the experiences of both government and community in the province and is drawn from their thoughts, discussions and meetings.

Specifically, the Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC), of the Violence Prevention Initiative, identified the development of a model for community-government collaboration as a key item its Action Plan for 2002-2003:

> *True collaboration with the community is pivotal to the process of improving structures, legislation, policy and services affecting victims of violence. The recent process used by the Department of Human Resources and Employment to produce its Moving Forward: Responding to the Needs of Victims of Violence is seen as one positive model for community collaboration which could be duplicated by other departments and agencies. Implementation of such processes will provide the community with consistent, long-term access to government decision making which is not tied to special initiatives or programs. The other side of the coin is to ensure that the community has the ability and support to participate and that all groups and agencies have an opportunity to contribute.*
>
> *Objective: To develop a model process for government and the community to come together to identify issues and develop strategies to resolve them at the departmental level* (VPI Action Plan 2002-2003)

As part of its commitment to develop a model for community-government collaboration, the PCC held a meeting in February 2003, (Community Collaboration Processes: The HRE Experience) with members of the Victims of Violence Working Group to examine the community consultation process adopted by the Department of Human Resources and Employment, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Following this, the PCC formed a working committee in June 2003, to draft a model for a community collaboration process to be recommended for use by partners of the Violence Prevention Initiative.

Two consulting firms contributed to the formation of the Guide. In the first instance, The Beach Rock Group facilitated the session where the best practices of the Working Group of the Victims of Violence were captured and the steps were first discretely identified. Hollett and Sons Inc. worked with those results, added further primary and secondary research and developed and edited it into this Guide, under the direction of the following people who gave freely of their time, thoughts and energy:

- Kim Dreaddy, Director, Provincial Association Against Family Violence
- Joyce Hancock, President, Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Kathleen Jason, Co-ordinator, Western Regional Co-ordinating Committee Against Violence
- Roxie Wheaton, Avalon Region Manager, Human Resources and Employment
- Mona Wall, Manager, Violence Prevention Initiative
- Deborah Keats, Executive Director, Iris Kirby House

Appendix A - Key Learnings

From the Population and Public Health Branch

PPHB Health Canada Key Learnings:

1. Building trust takes time commitment and shared learning
2. Intersectoral work between government departments and community-based organizations requires clarity on the goal of the shared work
3. Stability of commitment and resources is essential
4. The analysis of social and economic exclusion/inclusion was integrated into the overall work of PPHB Atlantic
5. Working through an "honest" broker is essential
6. It is important to find participants who are open to the analysis provided by the social and economic exclusion/inclusion and interested in applying it to forwarding their own work
7. Finding areas of shared understanding is necessary
8. It is important to capitalize on opportunities that enable the concepts of social and economic exclusion/inclusion to inform policy
9. Opportunities for informing "up" in organizational hierarchies must be created. The higher "up" the leadership,. The more profound the opportunities for change.
10. Participants should be empowered to take these concepts to the highest levels they can access within their organizations/governments
11. These concepts have had a profound impact on the work of PPHB in Atlantic and its Partners
12. Adoption of the Population Health Framework by Health Canada and the Provincial Departments of Health has enabled Health Canada to take a lead role in the promotion of an understanding of the concepts of social and economic exclusion
13. Not only do we need to understand the 12 determinants of health, social and economic exclusion/inclusion also requires that we look at the interplay among the determinants of health and over the entire life cycle.
14. Complex problems require complex solutions. Intersectoral action is required to address the systemic nature of these exclusions.
15. Population health is the outcome of the collective public policies of a society
16. Social and economic exclusion is expensive for all members of society. Analysis of the inequities of the social and economic gradients gives compelling evidence to those who are charged with managing the country's resources

17. Health Canada, through PPHB, is in a unique position to take a leadership role in promoting the social and economic inclusion of all citizens, especially women, their children and communities.

From the Community Collaboration Assessment Tool

1. Communication - the collaboration has open and clear communication. There is an established process for communication between meetings;
2. Sustainability - the collaboration has a plan for sustaining membership and resources. This involves membership guidelines relating to terms of office and replacement of members;
3. Research and Evaluation - the collaboration has conducted a needs assessment or has obtained information to establish its goals and the collaboration continues to collect data to measure goal achievement;
4. Political Climate - the history and environment surrounding power and decision making is positive. Political climate may be within the community as a whole, systems within the community or networks of people;
5. Resources - the collaboration has access to needed resources. Resources refer to four types of capital: environmental, in-kind, financial, and human;
6. Catalysts - the collaboration was started because of existing problem(s) or the reason(s) for collaboration to exist required a comprehensive approach;
7. Policies/Laws/Regulations - the collaboration has changed policies, laws, and/or regulations that allow the collaboration to function effectively;
8. History - the community has a history of working cooperatively and solving problems;
9. Connectedness - members of this collaboration are connected and have established informal and formal communication networks at all levels;
10. Leadership - the leadership facilitates and supports team building, and capitalizes upon diversity and individual, group and organizational strengths;
11. Community Development - this community was mobilized to address important issues. There is a communication system and formal information channels that permit the exploration of issues, goals and objectives; and,
12. Understanding Community - the collaboration understands the community, including its people, cultures, values and habits.

(Borden, Lynne M. & Daniel F. Perkins "Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self Evaluation Tool", Journal of Extension, April 1999 Volume 37 Number 2 http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt1.html)

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Endnotes

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